

**DEEP DIVE FOR YOUNG ADVISORS
NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT PARTNERSHIP PROJECT**

**THE CONSTRUCTION CREW
LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY PROJECT**

Submitted to: *Young Advisors*

Submitted by: *The Kaizen Partnership Ltd*

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) Construction Crew Leadership and Responsibility Project (CCP) was set up to provide opportunities for children in primary schools in the 5 host Boroughs, (Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham, Greenwich and Waltham Forest) to become more meaningfully involved in the regeneration efforts happening in their communities. The CCP involves 20 primary schools, with 2 children from each school acting as Construction Crew Members (CC Members). A staff person accompanies the CC Members to workshops and supports them in school to share ODA activities and themes.

1.2. PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

The CCP is a project of the ODA, one of a number of projects run by their Community Relations Team to involve and engage the local community in what is happening at the site. **The main delivery partner for the CCP is The Kaizen Partnership Ltd (Kaizen)**, with both having distinct responsibilities for delivering aspects of the CCP. The CCP also relies upon the partnership of the 20 schools that participate in the project.

1.3. PROJECT DELIVERY, TIMELINES AND OUTPUTS

The CCP begins in May of each year when schools elect their CC Members (CCMs) and staff receive training and orientation. The CCP runs from September to June and includes the following key activities:

- **Leadership Workshops:** 5 throughout the year, each one covering a new theme and building skills through the leadership and responsibility curriculum;
- **Theme Activities and Assemblies:** developed by CC Members and hosted in their schools with visits from ODA staff;
- **Coaching and Support:** monthly coaching calls to supervising staff;
- **Community Engagement:** CC Members, with support from their school, host at least one activity during the year to share what they are learning with the wider community.

1.4. PROJECT OUTCOMES

The CCP evaluation shows that it has been successful in meeting all 3 of its stated outcomes and is therefore having an impact in the local community, and especially in schools:

- **Develop the leadership and life skills of the CC Members:** To successfully enable young people to play a civic role, projects need to support and develop leadership skills in the young people who participate, and data suggests it has been one of the key elements to the success of this project.
- **Develop excitement and interest in the schools about what is happening at the Olympic Park and increase knowledge about ODA activities:** As well as getting the word out to 7,000 young people in the host communities, CC Members are also sharing about the project to their friends and families.
- **Positively impact the schools:** An unanticipated success of the project has been the impact of focusing on a few young people at each school, with staff commenting how these children have become role models in the schools.

1.5. PROJECT ENABLERS

- **CC Members developed a greater understanding of social issues within their community**

The ODA has been keen to educate the CCMs about the real issues of regeneration and construction, and to build their confidence to present the information and ask questions. As schools commented, this has provided an effective medium to teach young children the skills they need to engage in civic society: understanding how communities interact, debating, questioning, forming an argument and presenting.

Staff and Heads commented on the change in awareness of CC Members as a result of their participation, and the fact that **this learning translates into students taking more initiative to influence and change things within the school. Importantly, the CC Members are also becoming more aware of what is happening around them in their communities, and bringing that learning into their schools.** The CCP has engendered this through the Leadership and Responsibility curriculum, and by providing opportunities at every workshop for CC Members to meet senior management, which included the Chief Executive, of the ODA.

- **CC Members developed a greater confidence in their opinions and ideas**

Ultimately the CCP resulted in a more confident, articulate and knowledgeable group of young students, who were empowered to go back to their schools and take a leadership role in being ambassadors for a significant cultural event.

1.6. PROJECT BARRIERS

- **Schools buy-in**

Ensuring that schools are fully engaged in a similar project, and one that does not have the profile of the Olympic Games, requires creativity. This means taking the time to link the project or volunteer outcomes into the school's current responsibilities and outcomes.

- **What's in it for the young person?**

Programmes that seek to engage young people in civic projects have to make it worthwhile for the young people who participate. This means ensuring that the project has benefits beyond what they are actually doing, and ideally includes a training and coaching element.

1.7. CONCLUSIONS

All schools now have a duty to promote citizenship in their students, and to promote community cohesion. By setting up a structure that allows young people to engage meaningfully in what an organisation is doing and the part they play in the larger community, an organisation can effectively provide a vehicle for young people to be more involved, and to become powerful spokespeople for their project or organisation.

2. BACKGROUND

The ODA CCP was set up to provide opportunities for children in primary schools in the 5 host Boroughs, (Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham, Greenwich and Waltham Forest) to become more meaningfully involved in the regeneration efforts happening in their communities. The CCP Members, (most are year 6 students age 10 and 11), are trained to be ambassadors for the ODA in their schools and local communities.

The CCP supports key social capital values: trust engagement, communication, shared values, and interconnectedness.

'...social capital refers to connections among individuals: social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue.” The difference is that “social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital' (Putnam 2000: 19).

The success of the project has in large part been a result of the amazing opportunity this project offers to build social networks: Two CC Members from each school work as a team with students from 19 other schools; they work closely with a supervising staff person from their school building trust and openness; they have opportunities to engage directly with key people involved in building the Olympic Park and outer London venues; and ultimately they have a chance to share the excitement of the project with their schoolmates, families and friends.

In terms of civic roles and responsibility, the project provides opportunities for a group of young people to be directly involved in helping to fulfil a key government agenda, that of community cohesion. It could be argued that there is no more important civic agenda in society today than educating young people in the values of social cohesion. The project does that in a number of ways: through workshops that promote leadership, responsibility and shared values; through opportunities to learn about what is happening at the Olympic site in a very direct way, (they are able to meet high level staff including the Executive Director, and ask questions of them); and through this the young people begin to see beyond the boundaries of their lives, and make connections into a wider community they play a crucial part in.

1. PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

The CCP is a project of the ODA, one of a number of projects run by their Community Relations Team to involve and engage the local community in what is happening at the site. The main delivery partner for the CCP is The Kaizen Partnership Ltd (Kaizen), with both having distinct responsibilities for delivering aspects of the CCP. The CCP also relies upon the partnership of the 20 schools that participate in the project.

1.1. Olympic Delivery Authority

The ODA is the public body responsible for designing and building the new venues and infrastructure for the Olympic and Paralympic games and their use post 2012. The ODA's work is underpinned by six priority themes: design and accessibility; employment and skills; equality and inclusion; health; safety and security; sustainability and legacy. These themes are included as key aspects of learning in the CCP.

A key responsibility of the ODA is to engage and involve local communities in the host Boroughs in these efforts, and to ensure the 2012 Olympic Games have a legacy in the local community. As part of these efforts, the Community Relations Team developed an education stream to showcase the positive things happening. The CCP is the only project within this stream that actively involves young people in communicating those messages.

For the CCP, the ODA hosts 5 workshops throughout the school year. Each workshop includes a tour of the site, leadership and responsibility curriculum, information on one of the three themes (history and archaeology, employment and skills and environment and sustainability), and an opportunity for CC Members to meet ODA staff responsible for different aspects of the development of the Olympic venues, and ask questions. The ODA also sends speakers for assemblies at all the participating schools, and supports community events hosted by the schools.

1.2. The Kaizen Partnership Ltd

In order to ensure the success of this project, the CCP requires that the delivery agency has expertise and skills in “promoting student leadership and responsibility” as well as “supporting communications with participating schools”. Kaizen was contracted to support this project because they have extensive expertise in these areas. Kaizen is a London based training and consultancy company that delivers work across the community sector. Kaizen provides a CCP Project Coordinator who communicates with the schools and provides coaching and support to staff, as well as providing expert facilitators to facilitate the workshops and design and deliver the Leadership and Responsibility curriculum.

For the CCP, Kaizen is also responsible for training and supporting participating school staff and CC Members including: engaging and maintaining contact with all schools involved in the project; facilitating a leadership and responsibility curriculum; training and coaching supervising staff; coaching and supporting the CC Members.

1.3. Participating schools

In its second year, the CCP involves 20 primary schools, 4 from each Borough. Each school has two CC Members who attend the workshops, and then bring ideas and activities back to their schools that spread the word about the key themes and what is happening. At each of the 20 primary schools, a supervising staff person is involved, attending all the workshops and benefiting from individual coaching and support.

2. PROJECT DELIVERY, TIMELINES AND OUTPUTS

2.1. Introduction

At the beginning of May 2008 the ODA implemented the CCP as a pilot project for one year with the aim of bringing students and school staff / teachers in the five host Boroughs closer to the action and progress on the Olympic Park. Between two and four students from eight schools participated (20 young people in total). The pilot project was so successful, that the ODA funded it for a further two years, expanding the project from 20 students from 8 schools to 40 students from 20 schools. The ODA also funded a Graduate CCP to continue involvement of CC Members from the first year. **The intention is to have 100 CC Members and Graduates by 2011.**

2.2. Main CCP Activities

The CCP begins in May of each year. Between May and July, schools elect CC Members to participate in the CCP the following year. Schools are encouraged to choose students who are not already leaders, and who therefore have the potential to benefit more fully from the leadership development of the project. Staff also receive training and orientation to the CCP. The CCP runs from September to June, ending with a final event showcasing what the schools have been doing. Appendix A is the Project Flow Diagram that includes the main activities of the CCP:

- **Leadership and Responsibility Curriculum:** 5 workshops in the year build the leadership skills of the CC Members and introduce key themes;
- **Theme Activities and Assemblies:** developed by CC Members and hosted in their schools;
- **Coaching and Support:** includes monthly coaching calls to supervising staff person and visits to school to work with CC Members;
- **Community Engagement:** CC Members with support of their school, host at least one activity during the year to share what they are learning with the wider community.

2.2.1. Leadership and Responsibility Curriculum

The Leadership and Responsibility curriculum focuses on providing opportunities for CC Members to develop their leadership capacities and presentation skills. From the curriculum they learn essential skills that support effective communication and community cohesion, including the promotion of shared values and a stronger respect for diversity. Kaizen deliver the curriculum and facilitate the workshops.

There are 5 workshops throughout the school year beginning with a 2-day workshop that introduces key skills CC Members will continue to develop:

- Responding effectively in difficult situations;
- Exploring how to communicate powerfully and effectively;
- Looking at judgements and self limitations;
- Exploring how to work together with people who are different from yourself.

At each workshop, CC Members and staff visit the site and are introduced to a new theme. Site visits emphasise the current theme, e.g. for employment and skills, CC Members were taken to the training centre and met construction workers, architects etc. working on the site. During the workshop, ODA staff visit to talk to CC Members and answer questions. CC Members regularly talk with the Chief Executive and other senior members of the ODA team.

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A final event in June allows CC Members to showcase activities to all the schools, Head Teachers, parents, ODA staff and visiting dignitaries.

2.2.2. Theme Activities and Assemblies

Throughout the year, four CCP themes are introduced. Three of the themes have activities attached to them. The themes emphasise priority themes of the ODA, and are chosen because they can enhance and support curriculum within the schools, e.g. history and archaeology emphasising local history, and employment and skills that teaches young people about jobs they can do. CC Members receive support to develop activities at their school that share and expand on the theme. Schools are encouraged to plan activities that fit into existing curriculum, and can be carried out in the classroom of the CC Members or in other classrooms. CC Members generally facilitate activities, and lead presentations in school assemblies.

ODA staff also visit each school during the year to support assemblies or key events.

2.2.3. Coaching and Support

School staff receive monthly coaching calls by an experienced educator from Kaizen. One visit a year to the school is also scheduled to support with a theme.

2.2.4. Community Engagement

A key goal of the CCP is to support schools in fulfilling their duty to promote community cohesion through increased activities and communication with other schools, agencies and members of their local community. CC Members and their schools are supported to host one event during the year. ODA offers staff and resources for these events.

3. PROJECT OUTCOMES

The CCP evaluation shows that it has been successful in meeting all 3 of its stated outcomes and is therefore having an impact in the local community, and especially in schools.

3.1. Develop the leadership and life skills of the CC Members

To successfully enable young people to play a civic role, any project needs to support and develop leadership skills in the young people who participate. Without a strong sense of confidence and ability to speak up, young people will all too often end up in token roles. Given the young age of the CC Members, this was of great importance in the CCP, and data suggests it has been one of the key elements to the success of the project.

"I noticed a sense of ownership. They are becoming more responsible and this is good preparation for leaving primary school."

"Those who quietly worked in the background are now more confident to contribute to discussion and be a role model."

One teacher recounted how one of the CC Members got in trouble with a group of his friends. As they were being told off, he led the way in expressing remorse and apologising for his behaviour. As his teacher said: *"He put what he learnt about personal responsibility straight into use."*

CCP staff also mentioned changes that other staff had seen in the CC Members.

"The year 6 teacher has noticed a change in C's confidence, as she was very quiet before."

"S's literacy teacher has noticed an improvement and she is trying hard to make definite decisions rather than hesitate."

3.2. Develop excitement and interest in the schools about what is happening at the Olympic Park and increase knowledge about ODA activities

All of the schools are embedding CCP themes into their curriculum and sharing the ideas and updates with all their classes. Approximately 7,000 children attend the 20 schools participating this year (based on OFSTED reports), and data shows that the participating schools have a highly diverse population of children, with many speaking a first-language other than English.

As well as aiming to getting the word out to 7,000 young people in the host communities, CC Members are also sharing about the project to their friends and families. Many schools are also sharing the CCP at parent evenings, and 3 of last years' schools had representatives from their Learning Trust attend the CCP assemblies. Additionally, schools contribute regular blogs, photos and information to the Get Set web site.

3.3. Positively impact the schools

An unanticipated success of the project has been the impact of focusing on a few young people at each school. Interestingly, this was voiced as a concern by many of the Heads in the initial meetings. They wondered at the value of committing so much time to two students and how this would benefit the whole school. By the end of the first year of the CCP, this concern had all but disappeared, with staff commenting how these children had become role models in the schools.

4. KEY ENABLERS AND BARRIERS

4.1. Enablers

In interviewing key stakeholders and CC Members for this study, and reviewing evaluation data from last year's CCP, two key enablers were identified that ensured the success of this project in promoting civic engagement.

- CC Members developed a greater understanding of social issues within their community;
- CC Members developed a greater confidence in their opinions and ideas.

4.1.1. CC Members developed a greater understanding of social issues within their community

As part of the ODA's Community Relations Strategy, the CCP was designed on the basis that by having young people at the forefront, presenting and delivering key messages about the ODA and the construction programme for 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, this would be a stronger mode of communication than simply having ODA staff or other adults visit schools.

*"Mostly what we are doing is about information sharing but this allows us, to reach out to schools, and **very much relies on the relationships with the young people. They communicate in their own way what we are doing.** That's very different than us communicating it."*

George Middleton, ODA

The ODA has also been keen to educate the CCMs about the real issues of regeneration and construction, and to support and empower them to ask important questions. As the ODA Community Relations Manager put it:

*"Really **we wanted them to understand the benefits of this project**, e.g. our targets around employment skills and reaching 20% of local workforce; or working with our stakeholders in terms of managing our carbon footprint. This project is about building their confidence so they can learn and present this information, ask questions effectively, challenge what they see."*

This has the effect of educating the CC Members about important social issues, while encouraging them to ask questions and take the learning a step further. This has stimulated lots of dialogue and discussion within their schools.

"We had a debate in Year 5 about whether the 2012 Olympic Games was a good idea or not. It isn't often that we see these children debating in this way about something that is happening beyond the boundaries of their lives."

"Teachers are talking about it and what it actually means for the community. We had parents who did not know about it, and parents who were anti the Olympic Games happening here. So now they have a lot more knowledge of what the community is getting out of it."

As schools commented, what this means is that they have an effective medium to teach young children skills they need to engage in civic society: understanding how communities interact, debating, questioning, forming an argument.

The CC Members would not have developed these skills without the inclusion of the Leadership and

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Responsibility Curriculum. This was highlighted as a key factor in the success of the CCP by almost all staff at the end of the first year of the project. The curriculum encourages CC Members to explore how to communicate powerfully and effectively and how to work together with people who are different. Staff commented on the change in awareness of CC Members as a result of their participation:

“They are a lot more aware of people / adults / business (and) of what’s going on around them. They think in a different way.”

“They have taken what they are learning at the workshops and they’ve tried to involve the wider community. Not just those in their schools or in their classes.”

“Because they are mixing with students from other Boroughs, it extends their friendship group and makes them more aware of what is around them. We do some of that with local schools, but this is much broader.”

Teachers and Heads also commented on the fact that **this learning translates into students taking more initiative to influence and change things within the school:**

“The two of them came to me last week and they asked about what happens with all the left over food at lunch-time. They said, ‘I know the school is recycling paper, so why can we not recycle that.’”

“Today they came and asked if I would think of ways we could collect money for Haiti. What are they allowed to do and how can they send it. And this is without any prompting from me.”

Importantly, **the CC Members are also becoming more aware of what is happening around them in their communities, and bringing that learning into their schools.** One school described how, after the CC Members had attended the session on employment and skills, they went out and interviewed local business people. They brought some of them into the school to talk about what they do. They also came up with an activity for all KS2 students, to go home and interview their parents about what they do, and from that create a display, “A day in the Life of.”

“The school would not have had a reason to do this without this project. It’s not in the curriculum.”

“If young people of this age are to get more involved in civic life, they first have to feel confident that what they have to say is important and will be listened to.”

The CCP has engendered this through the Leadership and Responsibility curriculum, and by providing opportunities at every workshop for CC Members to meet significant, and high-level people from within the ODA.

“If you allow in any organisation for senior management to donate some of their time to speaking with young people, what this project showed is that this can really have an impact. We had our Chief Exec and our Chairman meet these young people.”

Georgia Sharpe ODA

4.1.2. CC Members developed a greater confidence in their opinions and ideas

All of the data points to the value of this approach in building and developing the confidence of the CC Members:

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"I think the CCP is mostly about giving them the confidence that they can achieve anything. These are children that would not normally do anything like that. They are well and truly out of their comfort zone."

"They have the confidence to speak to these kind of people and not feel embarrassed, but feel their opinion does matter."

"They are much more confident. The one girl would never even have said anything in class and she is now house captain."

Comments from students also reflected this growing confidence:

"After the assembly, I was feeling like I am the boss. Our head does not do PowerPoint, but we knew it was important to show pictures, so we used PowerPoint."

"I really did not used to talk to every student, but now because I've stood up in front of the whole school, I can talk to everyone."

Ultimately the CCP resulted in a more confident, outspoken group of young students, who were empowered to go back to their schools and take a leadership role in being ambassadors for a significant cultural event. As two Head teachers commented:

'It builds their confidence and raises their self-esteem. They have to do things that really push them. Asking questions, doing presentations.'

"At the end of last year they did a presentation to a big crowd with Heads from all the schools, parents, ODA staff. For this age to stand up in front of this many people is huge. Many adults couldn't do it."

4.2. Barriers

In interviews with key stakeholders, none identified any specific barriers. Two potential barriers are highlighted here:

4.2.1. School Buy-In

To be successful, a project like the CCP requires the committed involvement of the schools. Each school committed one staff person who attends workshops and events with their two CCPs and supports them during the year with their activities and assemblies. Additionally, the project has been successful for the CC Members because of the work the schools have done to bring the CCP themes into classroom curriculum, and allow that kind of creative input from the CC Member.

Ensuring that schools are fully engaged in a similar project, and one that does not have the profile of the Olympic Games, requires creativity; ensuring that schools have a very clear sense of the benefits for them. This means taking the time to link the project or volunteer outcomes into the school's current responsibilities and outcomes, such as 'Every Child Matters' and the 'Duty to Promote Community Cohesion'. Finding out what schools are already doing to promote citizenship and tying into their existing curriculum is also important.

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Finally, the CCP project invested in the time and expertise of people with education background who support and maintain regular contact with all the schools. Without this kind of communication, schools will inevitably get involved in other priorities.

4.2.2. What's in it for the young person?

One of the main reasons the CCP was successful is that it engaged the CC Members:

“Relationship is the key, and ensuring it's a positive one and one that grows and strengthens, it's about making sure that what we are doing with the schools and young people is fresh and new, and that the young people enjoy it especially in terms of development.”

George Middleton, ODA

Programmes that seek to engage young people in civic projects have to make it worthwhile for the young people who participate. This means ensuring that the project has benefits beyond what they are actually doing. For example, the CCP provided the young people with skills that will benefit them as they transition to secondary school”

“The kids are going into secondary school with a different attitude. And it's not just the two of them. Lots of their classmates are being affected by this. So I think they will start secondary school with a different attitude because they know this community they live in now...I think this has to do with them having a broader awareness of their community.”

Projects like this need a training and coaching element to ensure they continue to develop the skills of the young people. With an older age group, it would be ideal to involve them in some way in developing and support training and coaching, e.g. peer education or mentoring. Without investment in this, the benefits to the young people can easily be lost.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Obviously few projects will have the high profile of the Olympic Games. Yet, most aspects of this project could easily be replicated. **Essentially this project is about developing and empowering young people to be ambassadors for a project or organisation.** An example of how this could be replicated would be with a Primary Care Trust, a large community housing developer, or with an organisation such as the police or a Local Authority Department. All have the same duty to promote community cohesion and to involve the local community in meaningful ways.

The CCP is showing incredible success as a format for meaningfully engaging young people and bringing interesting ideas to schools. All schools now have a duty to promote citizenship in their students, and to promote community cohesion. By setting up a structure that allows young people to engage meaningfully in what an organisation is doing and the part they play in the larger community, an organisation can effectively provide a vehicle for young people to be more involved, and to become powerful spokespeople for their project or organisation.

Key elements to successfully replicating this project include:

- **A leadership training curriculum** that teaches young people key skills and values;
- **Effective engagement of schools** that includes being clear about outcomes and regular communication;
- **Providing support to school staff**, including how to incorporate activities into existing curriculum;
- Providing **access to senior staff** within the organisation;
- Providing **hands-on opportunities to see and experience what your organisation does**, and why; and
- **A clear set of learning outcomes or themes** that you want to communicate to the wider community.